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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 KIRKUK 000023

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BAGHDAD FOR POL, POLMIL, NCT

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [KDEM](#) [PREL](#) [IZ](#)
SUBJECT: (U) RC FAREWELL VISIT TO ERBIL

REF: KIRKUK 4

CLASSIFIED BY: RBELL, PRC, PRC, DOS.
REASON: 1.4 (b), (d)

¶1. (SBU) INTRODUCTION AND SUMMARY: On January 29, Regional Coordinator (RC), accompanied by Deputy RC and IPAO, held farewell meetings in Erbil with senior Kurdistan Regional Government-Erbil (KRG-E) leaders affiliated with the Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP), including Karim Sinjari, the Minister of Interior; Hoshyar Siwaily, the Deputy Minister of Humanitarian Affairs and Cooperation; they were joined at a farewell lunch by Shafiq Qazzaz, Minister of Humanitarian Affairs and Cooperation, and Mohammed Ihsan Ahmed, Minister for Human Rights.

¶2. (C) Siwaily offered to assist the USG in any way with establishing a Regional Reconstruction Team (RRT) office in Erbil. He and Sinjari said President Talabani was pushing KRG-Sulaymaniyah Prime Minister Omar Fattah against his will to become Deputy PM in a unified KRG, while Kosrat Rasoul Ali was pushing the head of the PUK office in Erbil, Arselan Baiz. END INTRODUCTION AND SUMMARY.

(SBU) SIWAILY: SAVING JOBS FIRST

¶3. (C) Siwaily said:

-- He would assist the USG in any way he could in establishing a Regional Reconstruction Team (RRT) office in Erbil, including by recommending locals to hire if we wanted.

-- The most important issue concerning unification of the two Kurdish regional governments is what will happen to all of the redundant personnel. One option would be simply to retitle an existing ministry and transfer all its employees to the new ministry.

-- The Kurdistan National Assembly (KNA) has now passed a law establishing the new posts of KRG Vice President and Deputy Prime Minister, in accordance with the unification agreement (reftel). The positions of Prime Minister and his deputy will automatically rotate between the Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP) and Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK) at the end of 2007; same for the posts of Speaker of the Kurdistan National Assembly and his deputy. At this point, it is not envisaged that the ministers will rotate. It is expected that ministers will be of the same party as their deputies.

-- The public wants greater choice of political party than just

the KDP or PUK. However, for the next four or five years it is better for Kurdistan to be ruled by a coalition government.

-- The PUK has not made up its mind whom to nominate for the post of deputy prime minister. Talabani wants Omar Fattah, but Fattah does not want the job (NOTE: Going from KRG-S Prime Minister to KRG Deputy PM would likely seem to be a demotion for him. END NOTE.); three others are being mentioned as candidates. This is what is holding up progress.

-- The unification agreement envisages no Ministry of Humanitarian Aid and Cooperation, because to Baghdad this sounds too much like a Kurdish foreign ministry. However, the unified KRG will have a new Ministry of Extra-Regional Affairs. Siwaily expects a post in the Council of Ministers. (COMMENT: Given his pleasant manner and excellent English from his years in Britain, we suspect it will involve dealing with foreigners. END COMMENT.)

-- The Sunni Arabs are unlikely to give up their stance of having one foot in the insurgency and one foot in the political process because it has worked well for them so far. (Note: Human Rights Minister Mohammed Ihsan Ahmed opined that Ayad Allawi was playing with fire by appealing to the Sunni Arabs, and risked losing his secular Shiite Arab base. End Note.)

-- Grand Ayatollah Sistani has lots of money, as shown by his having offices in London, Seattle, Sydney etc. Some income is from Iran, but much comes from the Shiite religious tax "khoms."

(C) SINJARI: WHO'S TO BE WHO

14. (C) KRG-E MOI Karim Sinjari said:

-- The PUK has four possible nominees to become Deputy PM:

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President Talabani is pushing KRG-S PM Omar Fattah (against his will), PUK Dep SecGen Noshirwan Mustafa is backing Muhammad Tawfiq, and Kosrat Rasoul Ali is pushing the head of the PUK office in Erbil, Arselan Baiz. Fattah's Deputy PM Emad Ahmed is also in the running.

-- Sinjari will be personally involved in the difficult work of unifying the two intelligence organizations of the KRG's. A joint committee is to be formed once the unified Prime Minister is appointed.

-- Joint committees are to be formed to manage the merger of each KRG-E ministry with its KRG-S counterpart, but they have not yet been set up.

-- Although the unified KRG's ministers will continue to be political appointees who serve at the pleasure of the Prime Minister, deputy ministers, directors general and other senior officials must be competent professionals. The PUK has proposed that KDP and PUK each nominate three people for each position and a committee composed of the ministers, Prime Minister and Deputy Prime Minister should decide.

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